

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2019 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 035-AH**

Implementing Conservation Plans for Avian Species of Concern

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**Category:** H. Proposals seeking \$200,000 or less in funding

**Sub-Category:** A. Foundational Natural Resource Data and Information

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**Total Project Budget: \$** 124,500

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** June 30, 2022 (3 yrs)

**Summary:**

Establishing monitoring sites to implement Conservation Plans for selected focal species using information from the statewide marshbird survey and the Breeding Bird Atlas focused within existing Important Bird Areas

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**Name:** Kristin Hall

**Sponsoring Organization:** Audubon Minnesota

**Title:** Conservation Manager

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**Location**

**Region:** Statewide

**County Name:** Statewide

**City / Township:**

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**Alternate Text for Visual:**

Conservation Plan implementation site-selection opportunity map, showing 19 priority IBAs, uniquely identified to highlight associated focal species.

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity	_____ Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ TOTAL _____%
_____ If under \$200,000, waive presentation?			



**PROJECT TITLE: Implementing Conservation Plans for Avian Species of Concern**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT:**

We propose establishing benchmark survey sites to guide restoration and enhancement activities within Important Bird Areas for three species of conservation concern: The Common Tern, Black Tern and Yellow Rail. Over the past 10 years, Audubon MN has built a solid avian monitoring foundation with the completion of the Breeding Bird Atlas (MNBBA) in 2017 and the implementation of the statewide marshbird monitoring program in 2016. Using the protocol from the marshbird survey and the information gathered from the MNBBA, we propose establishing benchmark survey locations for these species of conservation need in order to better document and guide collaborative conservation efforts.

All three of these birds are focal species within Audubon's Blueprint for Bird Conservation and have individualized, action oriented conservation plans. The Yellow Rail was the least abundant focal species documented in the statewide marshbird monitoring effort. Benchmark sites focused on Yellow Rails are essential to understanding their decline. For Black Terns, the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program reports a statistically significant declining trend (10.5% annual change) in the Great Lakes basin from 1995-2012; this is the largest decline of any marsh bird monitored by the program (Tozer 2013). Finally, Common Terns are a state threatened species with only 5 active colonies in Minnesota. Our intention is to support the coordinated implementation of the Blueprint for Bird Conservation Plans (Pfannmuller 2014) for each of these species.

There are 19 potential IBAs with occupancy records for the three focal species. We plan to designate up to 10 benchmark sites per focal species (some may overlap) within these priority IBAs. Once established, the benchmark sites will be added to the ongoing marshbird survey effort and surveyed by seasonal field technicians. Detailed habitat metrics will be recorded at each benchmark site to determine focal species occupancy as it relates to habitat composition and structure. Benchmark sites will also take into account current and planned management and serve as a resource to determine species response to such actions. Recommendations based on the comprehensive marshbird survey results and the data collected from the benchmark survey sites, will be shared with statewide and regional working groups focused on wetland habitat improvements and species specific management (i.e. the MN Prairie Conservation Plan, the Joint Ventures Great Lakes Waterbird Working group and the Common Tern management working group).

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1: Implementation Area Site Selection:** Use the MN BBA and Important Bird Areas to establish focal benchmark marshbird survey locations. Site selection will be done via remote sensing using GIS and input from partnership collaboration. Then in-person site visits will determine the suitability of locations for the focal species.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$15,000**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Conduct cross analysis of Breeding Bird Atlas data and IBA criterion	Fall 2019
2. Create GIS layer of benchmark sites to ground truth	Winter 2019
3. Ground truth and formalize benchmark site selection	Spring 2020

**Activity 2: Data Collection:** Conduct 2 seasons of data collection at benchmark (staff) and marshbird survey (volunteers) sites. Field staff will use point count and secretive marshbird survey protocols. A non-invasive, small, video capable drone will be used to gain visual access to inaccessible marsh habitats. Report on findings and develop management recommendations for ongoing restoration and enhancement work.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$109,500**



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**  
**2019 Main Proposal Template**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<i>1. Coordinate volunteers in continued marshbird survey effort statewide</i>	<i>2020 -2021</i>
<i>2. Hire field staff to collect 2 field seasons of benchmark species and collect habitat data</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>
<i>3. Field staff will use non-invasive, small, video capable drone to gain visual access to inaccessible marsh habitats.</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>
<i>3. Analyze and report on benchmark survey efforts, work to integrate recommendations into existing habitat management for these focal species</i>	<i>2022</i>

**III. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

**A. Partners receiving ENRTF funding**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Role</b>
N/A			

**B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Role</b>
Caleb Putnam	MI Bird Conservation Coordinator	Audubon and MI DNR	Great Lakes Black Tern working group coordination
Rachel Pierce	Migratory Bird Biologist	USFWS	Regional Marshbird monitoring coordination
Anna Sidie-Slettedahl	Assistant Coordinator	USFWS Upper MS River & Great Lakes Region JV	Yellow Rail expertise and collaboration
TBD	TBD	Multiple entities	Common Tern Working group

**IV. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

This project focuses on implementing the management plans (MN Conservation Blueprint for Bird Conservation, 2014) for three benchmark species. We have built a solid foundation of monitoring information to guide this work and look to address specific habitat requirements of these species to advise ongoing restoration work. Audubon's role is to use the information gathered from these benchmark survey sites to provide recommendations to area managers working to conserve these focal species. There is potential for long term monitoring of avian use in these survey sites at 5 to 10 year intervals. If needed, we would seek additional funding from available state or federal resources for the follow-up monitoring activities.

**V. TIME LINE REQUIREMENTS:**

The first 6 months (July 1 2019-Dec 31 2019) will be devoted to defining the benchmark sights and coordinating the ground truthing effort. The following 2 years (2020-2021) will focus on collecting species occupancy and habitat association data. The final 6 months (ending July 1, 2021) will be spent analyzing the results of this species-specific effort and developing recommendations for management and continued conservation action.

## 2019 Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

**Project Title: Implementing Conservation Plans for Avian Species of Concern**

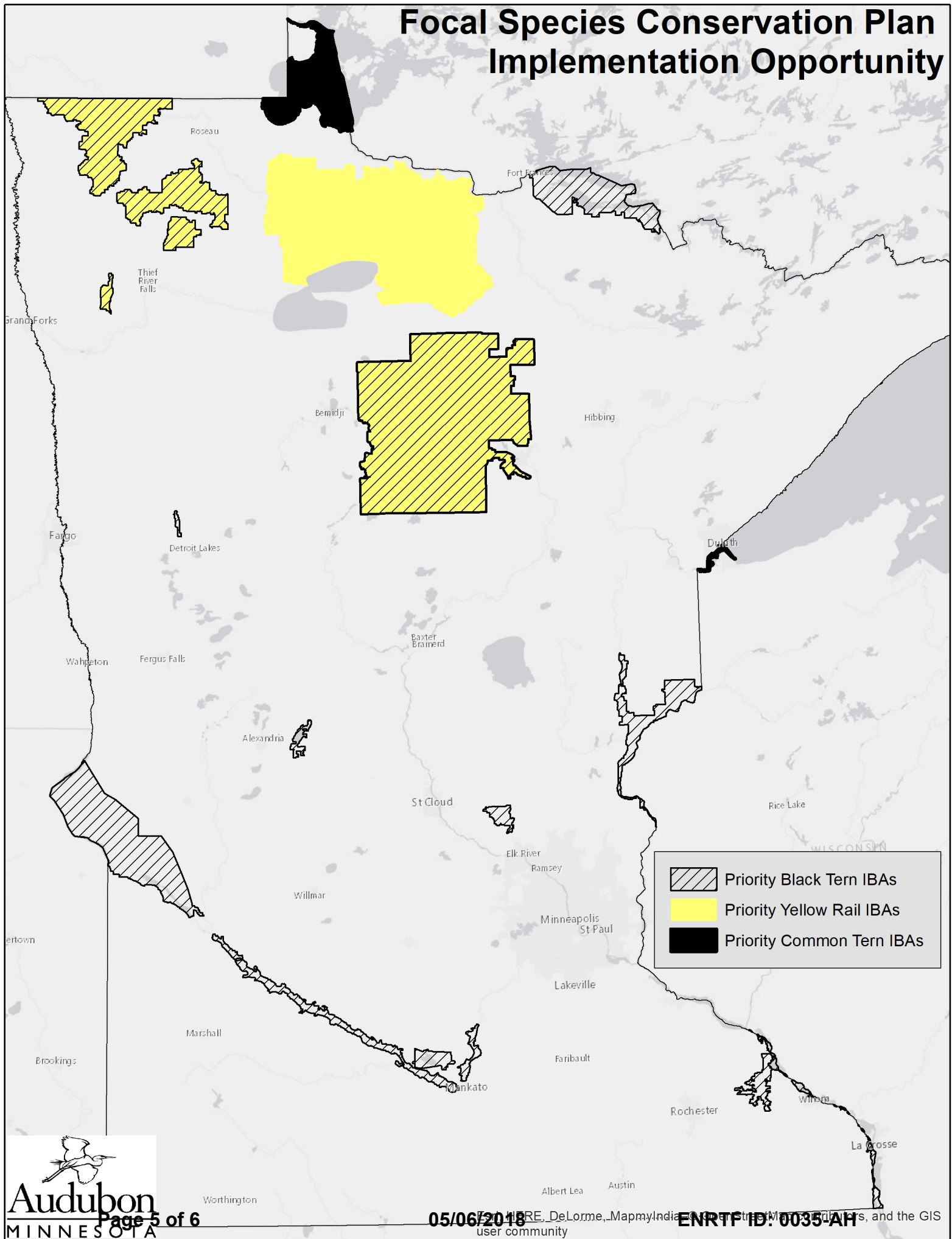
### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

<b>BUDGET ITEM</b> (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses")	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Personnel:</b>	\$ 95,300
Project Manager: \$52,000 (75% salary, 25% benefits); 32% FTE each year for 3 years	
Administrative support: \$7,500, (75% salary, 25% benefits); 6% FTE each year for 3 years for actual work spent on grant	
2 Temporary Field Surveyors: \$35,800, (93% Salary and 7% benefits); 19%FTE- 10 weeks, each person for each year for 2 years	
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:</b>	\$ 11,000
Statistical analysis contract (80 hours): \$5000	
Boat (2 boat trips per season) and/or air (1 flight per season) service for remote access to benchmark locations: \$6000	
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> surveyor supplies such as: chest waders (2 pr \$150/pair), safety vests, flagging, batteries, printing data sheets, field packs, video capable drone (\$500) for nest surveys	\$ 1,200
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b>	\$ -
<b>Travel:</b> staff and surveyor(s) travel/ lodging as permitted by DNR commissioners plan	\$ 17,000
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b>	\$ -
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 124,500</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS (This entire section must be filled out. Do not delete rows. Indicate "N/A" if row is not applicable.)

<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: Audubon indirect costs</b>	\$ 17,700	<i>confirmed</i>
<b>Restoring Black Tern Populations in the Upper Midwest (MN one of three states involved in proposal) Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Natural Resource Injury Restoration Funds</b>	\$ 250,000	<i>pending</i>
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>	N/A	
<b>In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>	N/A	
<b>Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b> Maximize Value of Water Impoundments to Wildlife. Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 06f	\$ 195,000	in progress
<b>Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b> Create a Statewide Waterbird Monitoring Program. Legal Citation: M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 03f	\$ 146,000	in progress
<b>Other Funding History:</b>	N/A	

# Focal Species Conservation Plan Implementation Opportunity



### Audubon Minnesota: Organizational Description

Audubon Minnesota is the state office of the National Audubon Society. Established in 1979, we share Audubon's 117-year heritage of working to protect our environment. While we are part of the national organization, we establish our own statewide programs and pursue our own funding for Minnesota efforts. The Audubon Minnesota mission is to conserve and restore Minnesota's natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Today there are nearly 17,000 Audubon members in Minnesota, organized into 14 geographically-based chapters from Agassiz Audubon Chapter in Thief River Falls to the Coulee Region Audubon Chapter in La Crescent.

### Manager Qualifications

Kristin Hall Conservation Manager – Audubon Minnesota

Kristin received her B.S. in Wildlife Biology from the University of Montana in 1996 and her M.S. in Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2005. She has worked in the field of conservation biology for over 20 years and has had the opportunity to study an array of bird species in diverse habitats. She has been with Audubon Minnesota since 2010 where she is currently the Conservation and Important Bird Area Program Manager. Kristin developed and implemented the statewide marshbird survey and is a contributing member of the MN Prairie Conservation Plan science team and state work group.